

14 SEP 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM : F. W. M. Jarney
Director of Personnel

SUBJECT : Vacancy Notice System

1. Action Requested: The attached memorandum was prepared in response to an oral request from your office to study a proposal of the FEO Panel. A recommendation is contained in paragraph 3.

2. Background: The memorandum addresses the proposal for an Agency-wide Vacancy Notice System to include all positions as they become vacant. In order to put the comments in context, a review of the Agency personnel management policy and the techniques designed to achieve its objectives is included. The comments are directed to the impact such a system would have on the present personnel management philosophy which provides for a strong measure of Career Service responsibility in the management and career development of employees. The memorandum deals with the filling of professional and technical positions which we assume is the area of interest to the FEO Panel, although the impact of such a proposal applies to clerical personnel as well.

3. Recommendation: It is recommended that the present system for use of vacancy notices be retained and that the Heads of the Career Services be urged to use it, where possible, on an Agency-wide basis, particularly for entry level positions.

F. W. M. Jarney

Attachment

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OP/P&C/RS [] (14 Sep 78)

REVIEW OF VACANCY NOTICE SYSTEM

The personnel management system of the Agency is based on a policy which assigns authority and responsibility for the management of positions and career development of employees to the Heads of the respective Career Services. The panel system which is used throughout the Agency and which supports the annual evaluation and promotion of employees is one mechanism by which this responsibility is carried out by each of the Career Services. Much of the input to management in terms of recommendations for employee training and assignment experiences comes from this evaluation process. DDO and the E Service advise that Panels have almost 100% responsibility for the career management recommendations for their careerists. In DDA the percentage is about 85%, and in NFAC it is between 80% and 90%. DDS&T advises a current rate of about 75%; but this will increase with a newly established program in OD&E. ORD because of its specialized work will continue to have frequent interchange with private industry rather than in-house development.

The Personnel Development Program (PDP) focuses on succession planning with the development of managers and employees for senior assignments as the essence of its purpose. A primary feature of the program is the identification of employees in the middle grades whose level of performance, talents and abilities, evidences potential meriting development for more senior positions. The development consists of planned experiences, including training courses and assignments, which will provide the exposure, background or expertise appropriate to successful management or executive level assignment. This same exercise of identification and developmental opportunities, although less formal than the PDP, is a responsibility of Panels, supervisors and career management offices for employees in the grades below GS-13 and for those employees who, for whatever reason, are not included in the PDP.

Employee career planning and development is a basic feature of the Agency's personnel management system, and helps to fill requirements in the many diverse and discrete professional disciplines of the individual Career Services. The overlap of Career Service missions and functions is minimal, and consequently, most employees develop their expertise and careers within the parameters of a given Career Service or Career Subgroup.

The Vacancy Notice System which now operates on three levels; i.e., at the Agency, Career Service, or Career Service Subgroup levels, is designed to complement the Agency's employee career development program. Units having a position vacancy for which there is no immediately available qualified or programmed candidate, issue a notice, sometimes

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sequentially and sometimes directly to the Agency level. The initial level of publication of the notice is most often determined by prior experience and the knowledge of where suitable candidates might be found. It can also be determined by Career Service policies. The advertising of vacant positions usually cover entry level jobs or new positions, though there are frequent exceptions of middle level jobs. The August 1978 summary of Agency-wide Vacancy Notices (copy attached) shows 64 positions being advertised, ranging from a GS-15 Physical Scientist to a GS-03 Records Clerk. The recent Agency-wide advertising of a number of training positions available in the Office of Communications represented an effort to identify present employees who are interested and qualified to be trained as Commo Techs (Radio) and is an example of offering entry level positions. It was an opportunity for on-board employees to explore new career paths. The Office of Security recently advertised Agency-wide for candidates for positions newly established in support of an added security responsibility, jobs for which prior Agency experience provides the base for training in security specialities. In calendar year 1977, [] positions were advertised; [] were filled from the [] employees responding to the notices.

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Requiring the Vacancy Notice System to be applied Agency-wide for all position vacancies would work at cross-purposes with the Career Services and their responsibility for employee development. We do not see it providing any advantage over the present system and, in fact, see it as obstructing, if not destroying, the Agency concept of employee management. Developmental plans for employees already assigned to a component would become even more tentative than they are by the normal nature of advance planning, and many formal programs, including the upward mobility programs now operating, would be subject to serious challenge. The exercise by managers and supervisors of day to day responsibilities for personnel management would be frustrated. New impediments to the comparative evaluation and competitive promotion processes would develop and training for future jobs would become endangered and potentially wasteful. Finally, it may make it nearly impossible to expeditiously fill critical or unexpected needs, and to react quickly where program or project changes require early attention.

Continuing programs for the development of selected employees for certain positions while at the same time advertising and perhaps selecting other candidates for these same positions seems rather dysfunctional. Because of the high degree of occupational specialization in the Agency, it would be a rare occasion when the person in the office developmental process would not be better qualified than other Agency employees for the job in question. To issue a vacancy notice when a qualified candidate is, in effect, in situ, would be an unnecessarily expensive process for the Agency. While Agency-wide open bidding may satisfy a few employees, we believe it would be viewed by the majority as a hollow exercise if most selections come from within the Career Service.

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Even in the competitive Civil Service system there is not an open-ended application process for vacant positions. The selection is made from candidates identified from a group of eligible (certified) candidates, who had been previously tested or evaluated as fully qualified for various types and levels of positions. The Civil Service version of a vacancy notice is often published at less than the agency level if in management's judgment a sufficient pool of certified applicants is likely to be available in the immediate office or unit.

STAT [] There is also a practical problem in the proposal. Of approximately [] personnel actions processed each month, an estimated [] actions are identified with employee movements. To issue vacancy notices in each case would require an incredible amount of verification, editing, record handling and maintenance, question answering and referrals. This would require, at a minimum, an additional 15 to 18 persons in the Office of Personnel and even more if the Office of Personnel assumed responsibility for screening applicant files. On the other hand, if the responsibility for screening the files were given to each of the Career Services (we would recommend against decentralizing the issuance process) additional personnel would be required but the number would be difficult to judge without further study. STAT

Experience of agencies in the Civil Service competitive service suggests there would also be an increase in employee grievances. We are advised that grievance claims for non-selection can hold up filling Civil Service positions for months at a time. It is very probable that the review and adjudication of grievances under an Agency-wide system would create a requirement for even more personnel to be involved with the process.

STAT Rather than the Agency-wide advertising of all vacant positions, we considered recommending that all entry level positions for the various professions and disciplines be advertised before being filled by outside recruitment. Such a program, however, would most likely impede the effectiveness of Agency success in the recruitment of minority and women applicants. Outside professional and technical recruitment accounts for only about [] new employees a year; the technical group averages [] A large percentage of professional input each year comes from conversions of on-board clerical and technical employees to professional status. While the rate varies among the Career Services, the FY 77 APP reflects 34% of Agency professional input came from employee conversions; deleting 59 relatively routine conversions (OS and OSO have policies for automatic professional conversions in certain circumstances) the percentage is still 26.3% of the total. STAT

The EEO Panel proposal is premised on the assumption that there are numerous employees whose capabilities are not being fully utilized and that this type of program would remedy this problem. Various ways already exist for employees who are qualified for other types of work and desire change to make their interest known. Career Service

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counseling services and Career Management Officers are available for consultation. The Office of Personnel also provides a counseling service for all employees regardless of Career Service affiliation. The Career Services and the Office of Personnel both refer files of these employees to offices having the type of function of interest to the individuals. The Office of Personnel regularly forwards a list of employees seeking reassignment (EAR) to all Career Services and components thereof. Our experience is that a principal reason for not finding assignments for many of these individuals is a lack of the qualifications necessary for the position in which they are interested. An Agency-wide Vacancy Notice System would not solve that problem. As evidence, however, that employees are able to change their Career Services or Subgroups, in FY 77 approximately [] employees changed their Career Service designation, to date in FY 78 [] have done so. These figures do not include block changes such as transfer of offices between Directorates.

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Insofar as the argument is made that it is the Agency's responsibility to provide the means by which employees can become qualified for reassignment to other positions or types of work, the Career Service responsibility for career development offers the greatest opportunity for this type of advancement or change. It is unrealistic to expect offices to take unqualified employees from other offices and provide the necessary training and experience for assignment to the vacant positions, positions also desired by their own employees, often already trained.

For the few employees who through the proposed open-ended system might find other assignments for which they are qualified, we believe the same results can be achieved through the present systems. We believe the impact of Agency-wide competitive bidding for assignment would be traumatic on the morale of the majority of employees who identify with a Career Service, and have worked hard to advance in that Service.

We recommend that the level of advertising of Vacancy Notices be left to the option of the Heads of the Career Services but that they be urged to broaden the advertising base where possible to assure increased opportunity for those outside the Career Service who may be qualified to apply. Special consideration should be given to advertising entry level positions and those where the necessary specific technical expertise is provided in an Agency established training program.

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